*A Personal Statement of Faith & Spiritual Conviction*

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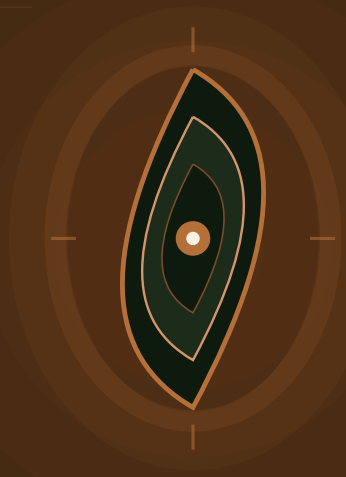
# What I Believe

*On God, Consciousness, and the Path Nobody Owns*



*"The kingdom of God is within you." — Luke 17:21*

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If you picked this up, something probably brought you here — a question you couldn't shake, a church that stopped making sense, a moment when the universe felt less like a machine and more like a presence. I know that feeling. This is where I landed.

I'm not a pastor, a guru, or a theologian with credentials on a wall. I'm someone who spent years inside a religious institution, got expelled from it, and then spent years more reading everything I could across traditions — Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Vedanta, Buddhism, Gnosticism, Hermeticism — looking for what was actually true, not just what was convenient. This document is an honest account of what I found.

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## 1. God Is Real — and Closer Than You Think

I believe in God — not as a distant authority figure issuing rules from outside the universe, but as the ground of consciousness itself. The source from which everything emerges and to which everything returns. Not a being among beings, but the Being behind all beings.

Across every tradition I've studied, the mystics who went deepest came back saying the same thing in different languages: the divine is not far away. It is the most intimate thing there is. It is what you are looking out of right now.

> *"The kingdom of God is within you."*
>
> — Jesus (Luke 17:21)

> *"Whoever knows himself knows his Lord."*
>
> — Prophet Muhammad (hadith)

> *"Tat tvam asi — That thou art."*
>
> — Chandogya Upanishad

This is not a metaphor. The mystics meant it literally. The divine is not something you earn access to through correct doctrine. It is something you realize — a recognition of what was always already

there.

## 2. Direct Access Was Always Possible

One of the most important things I believe — and one of the most suppressed — is this: you have never needed a middleman to reach God.

Every major religion contains, at its mystical core, a teaching about direct inner access to the divine. The Sufis called it *fana* — annihilation of the ego in God. The Kabbalists called it *devekut* — cleaving to the divine presence. The Gnostics spoke of the divine *spark* already present in every human soul. The Hindu Vedantists pointed to Atman — the self that is identical to Brahman, the universal consciousness.

These teachings were not invented by rebels or heretics. They were the original, inner-circle transmissions of each tradition — later buried, restricted, or reframed as dangerous by the institutions that grew up around them. The institution always wants you to need it. The mystic says you never did.

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*The divine spark does not require institutional permission to burn.*

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This is not an argument against community, practice, or guidance. Teachers, texts, and traditions are invaluable — the problem is when they position themselves as the only legitimate path. When they say *we alone hold the key*, they have become something other than spiritual guides. They have become gatekeepers.

## 3. Consciousness Does Not Die

I believe that what we are, at our deepest level, is not a product of the brain. Consciousness is not generated by neural tissue the way steam is generated by a kettle. The evidence — from near-death experiences, from verified accounts of veridical perception during cardiac arrest, from cross-cultural mystical experience — points in a different direction: that the brain is a receiver, a tuner, a filter through which a wider consciousness expresses itself.

This matters enormously. If consciousness is fundamental — if it is the ground of reality rather than a byproduct of matter — then death is not the end of what you are. It is a transition. A change of form for something that was never reducible to form in the first place.

I hold this not as wishful thinking but as the best interpretation of the available evidence, including the testimony of every major tradition and a growing body of scientific research that institutional materialist philosophy has struggled to explain away.

## 4. The Institutions Got It Partially Wrong

I was raised as a Jehovah's Witness. I know what it is to build your entire reality around a religious institution — to trust it completely, to defend it publicly, to shape your relationships and your calendar and your sense of self around its authority. And I know what it is to have that structure crack open.

What I found when I looked honestly at the history was not a conspiracy but something more ordinary and more troubling: human institutions, even well-intentioned ones, have a survival instinct. They protect their own authority. They restrict access to interpretations that threaten their power. They confuse loyalty to the institution with loyalty to God.

This happened in Christianity at Nicaea and across centuries of canon formation. It happened in Islam as the Sufi orders were marginalized. It happened in Judaism as Kabbalah was restricted to an educated elite. It happened everywhere institutions grew up around living spiritual transmissions and eventually began to confuse the container for the contents.

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*The map is not the territory.*
*The institution is not the divine.*

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I say this without bitterness. The traditions contain extraordinary wisdom. The scriptures, read with discernment, point toward real truths. But the institution that claims exclusive ownership of those truths has confused the finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself.

## 5. The Perennial Philosophy Is Real

After years of reading across traditions, the pattern is unmistakable. There is a core of wisdom that appears in every culture, in every era, in every tradition that has taken inner experience seriously. Aldous Huxley called it the Perennial Philosophy. The historian of religion Huston Smith mapped it across civilizations. The contemplative scholar Ken Wilber spent decades charting its structure.

**Reality is consciousness.**

At the deepest level, what exists is not matter but mind — not the individual mind, but a universal awareness in which individual minds arise and subside.

**The self is not what it thinks it is.**

The ego — the story of a separate self — is a functional construction, not the deepest truth of what you are. Beneath it is something unbounded and unchanged.

**Direct realization is possible.**

This is not theoretical. Human beings have, across every culture and era, reported the direct recognition of their own deepest nature. Mystical experience is the most consistent data point in all of human history.

**The ethical life flows from this realization.**

When you recognize that what you are is what everything else is, cruelty becomes absurd. Compassion becomes natural. You cannot harm what you know to be yourself.

## 6. You Don't Have to Choose Between Science and Spirit

One of the false choices I was handed growing up was this: you either believe the religious account of reality, or you believe the scientific one. They are incompatible. You must choose.

This is a false dichotomy, and an increasingly difficult one to defend. Quantum mechanics has dismantled the classical materialist picture of reality — the universe is not made of billiard balls obeying mechanical laws. Consciousness researchers like Christof Koch and Bernardo Kastrup are seriously engaging with the question of whether awareness is fundamental to reality. NDE research — conducted not by mystics but by cardiologists and neuroscientists — has produced data that materialism cannot comfortably accommodate.

The cutting edge of physics and the oldest contemplative traditions are converging on similar intuitions: that what we think of as matter is a surface phenomenon, that consciousness is more fundamental than we assumed, and that the universe is stranger and richer than either religion or science has yet fully described.

I am not interested in a faith that requires me to ignore evidence. I am interested in a framework large enough to hold both the testimony of the mystics and the findings of science — because I believe reality is large enough to contain both.

## A Note to the Reader

I'm not trying to start a religion or recruit you to a belief system. I'm sharing what I found after a long and often painful search — in the hope that it might be useful to someone else who is somewhere in the middle of theirs.

You don't have to agree with everything here. Frankly, I'd be suspicious of anyone who agreed with everything they read. What I'd ask is that you take the questions seriously — that you test these ideas against your own experience, your own reading, your own inner life. The truth, wherever it lives, can withstand scrutiny.

If something here opens a door — even just a crack — that's enough. The rest is between you and whatever you find on the other side.

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**The divine is not at the end of a long theological argument.**
**It is at the center of the present moment.**

**It has always been there.**
**The invitation is simply to notice.**

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